

SAVE UTAS

A newsletter produced by SAVE UTAS CAMPUS INC

Rockliff turns his back on UTAS crisis

UTAS management is under siege and the future of our university under threat while the Rockliff government remains silent, paralysed into inaction.

Vice Chancellor Black proudly claims (ABC radio 6 March) that the silence of government (and the Labor Opposition) shows its support for his management and decision making.

SIGNS OF CRISIS ARE EVERYWHERE:

- Staff have no confidence in leadership according to UTAS' own surveys
- UTAS leadership is in conflict with its own student body
- The Tasmanian legal profession had to save the Law School after 2/3 of Law School academic staff left.
- Enrolments are falling, down by 12% overall and 20% in one faculty
- Widespread complaints have triggered a parliamentary inquiry into UTAS
- Distinguished academics and national experts slammed UTAS leadership in inquiry evidence
- UTAS wasted millions on a \$600M Sandy Bay relocation plan which is now indefinitely suspended.
- Expensive UTAS buildings and vacant land, across the CBD, lie empty or rented out.

Just when UTAS needs strong leadership the university is headed by Vice Chancellor Black who finished his 5-year term in August 2022 and stays on indefinitely.

UTAS chose not to advertise for a successor who could provide new vision and restore confidence.

The Rockliff Government can save UTAS

The Rockliff government controls the legislation that controls UTAS. It has two representatives on the UTAS governing Council and two Ministers, Elise Archer and Madeleine Ogilvie, in the Clark electorate.

The government could urgently introduce a Bill requiring UTAS to consult and removing the legal loophole which enables UTAS to sell all the land it was gifted for the Sandy Bay campus. Instead, it gives UTAS free reign.

Twenty-two thousand Clark electors showed their strong opposition to relocation through the Hobart elector poll. In the next House of Assembly election the community will have another chance to be heard and this time will hold the Rockliff government and the Labor opposition to account for the UTAS crisis.

Time for Premier, MPs to 'step up'



UTAS Sandy Bay Campus



Proposed site of Law, Business Schools and Admin, Melville St

Melville Street design condemned

UTAS is proceeding with the \$131M (a blowout from the original \$86m) redevelopment of a 1930s building in Melville Street despite its announcement that all other plans to relocate are on hold and the huge community opposition to the move.

This decision also defies the recommendations of its own ShakeUp community advisory panel and claims by architects, staff and students that the building will not be fit-for-purpose.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICISMS?

1. The UTAS advisory panel recommended “green spaces” and a central campus where students can interact. Instead the Melville St building is surrounded by bitumen footpaths and roads and is far from the green spaces of Sandy Bay campus.
2. Architects and UTAS students say the building will be too small for 300 staff and 3000 students, is not fit for purpose and there is no parking. Its footprint will never be capable of expansion.
3. The Melville St Law School plan is one third the space of the existing Law Faculty building at Sandy Bay and lacks basic features like a lecture theatre and a library where students can study research in a peaceful environment.
4. Students and staff say there was no genuine consultation about either the design or the decision to relocate the Law School so far from the campus.

It is little wonder that UTAS staff surveys show 0% of Law School staff believe that UTAS management demonstrates that ‘employee well-being is important’ and only 6% think UTAS is in a position to succeed over the next three years.

Apart from the waste of \$131M by duplicating good buildings presently at Sandy Bay, the Melville St development will leave staff and students competing with shoppers for scarce parking and isolated from the campus and other faculties.



Demolishing good buildings

UTAS management has in part justified its plan to abandon the Sandy Bay campus with a claim that Sandy Bay campus buildings are no longer useable and that it’s cheaper to build from scratch in the city.

A building condition report, commissioned by UTAS in 2018, tells another story. The report revealed more than 60% of Sandy Bay buildings were in good condition and the cost of refurbishing others is far less than building in the Hobart CBD.

The UTAS relocation plan included the demolition of some of its best buildings, including the award-winning Centenary building, the recently refurbished Law Faculty building, the Administration building, the Pharmacy building, the recently refurbished Chemistry Labs, the IMAS building, the new glasshouse facilities and even the popular Unigym building.

The UTAS building condition report also revealed a \$100M backlog in Sandy Bay maintenance spending. To put this in perspective, the cost of refurbishing Sandy Bay buildings was less than the \$131M redevelopment of a single proposed UTAS CBD building. The waste is further magnified by the fact that Melville St only duplicates existing good buildings which UTAS plans to demolish.



The award-winning Centenary Building. UTAS wants to demolish it, moving the Business School to the controversial Melville St building.

The fight to save UTAS - a timeline

2021

- October – Save UTAS Campus Inc formed.
- After trader protests UTAS **Melville St parklet plan suspended**

2022

- May – SUC **public meeting** (700+ attended)
- June – SUC petition forces elector poll
- July – **Legislative Council (LegCo) inquiry into UTAS announced**
- August - **VC Black completes his five-year term** and is reappointed indefinitely
- August – **UTAS creates community Shakeup panel**
- September – LegCo Inquiry receives **149 submissions**.
- September - **UTAS spends \$1M** on elector poll advertising for a YES vote
- SUC delivers **pamphlets to 15000 Hobart homes, holds a public rally and erects 500 signs**
- October – **22,631 electors (74%) vote NO to UTAS relocation**
- UTAS announces plans for the Sandy Bay campus are on hold
- UTAS continues with plans to relocate to the CBD
- December – **Shake Up panel report** recommends ‘green spaces’ and a campus that should ‘facilitate great interaction between faculties, groups and societies’.
- December - LegCo inquiry commences 7 days of public hearings
- December – new **Hobart City Council** calls for a pause to relocation and for stakeholder mediation.

Trust lacking in uni changes

REPORT OUT ON SHAKE-UP PANEL

UTAS BUILD BLOWS OUT

Public meeting urges Premier to call review

2023

- January – Melville St redevelopment **40% cost blowout** from \$86M to \$131M.
- March - **Rockliff government says it will take no action**
- March - VC Black announces that, except for Melville St, UTAS relocation plans are on hold pending the outcome of HCC Precinct planning
- March - UTAS sheds **48 senior management positions**
- March – Appeal against Melville St DA approval lodged by Save UTAS Campus
- April – **UTAS Student Association announces it does not support UTAS relocation**



Public Meeting City Hall Hobart



Fletcher Clarke, 2022 Tasmanian University Law Students' Society president, addresses the public rally.

'Take over' riles traders

Student group opposes uni shift

Council's UTAS 'mistake'

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Donate to the SUC Fighting Fund www.saveutascampus.com/donate
- Write letters to newspapers <https://www.themercury.com.au/news/opinion/letter-to-the-editor>
- Write letters to politicians especially Premier Rockliff and Clark Ministers, Elise Archer and Madeleine Ogilvie. (A list of politicians' email addresses is available on Save Utas Campus webpage and Facebook page.)
- Follow Save UTAS Campus on Facebook and Instagram
- Subscribe to the Save UTAS Campus mailing list <https://www.saveutascampus.com/subscribe>
- Put up a sign on your front fence, pick up a free car sticker. (Email saveutascampus@gmail.com for pickup locations or go to our Facebook pages.)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION GO TO

Save UTAS Campus webpage
www.saveutascampus.com

Save UTAS Campus Private Group and Public Facebook pages,

Save UTAS Campus Instagram page and

The UTAS Papers webpage created by Robert Hogan, www.utaspapers.com